

Message Text

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11

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /036 W

----- 002615

R 091616Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2800

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

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CAPDTOWN FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, ZA

SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA CLOSED FOLLOWING FURTHER STUDENT
AGITATION

REF: LUSAKA 319

1. SUMMARY. CONTINUING STUDENT AGITATION AT UNIVERSITY OF
ZAMBIA (UNZA) CLIMAXED OVER WEEKEND WITH STUDENT-POLICE
CLASH AND SUBSEQUENT CLOSURE OF UNIVERSITY FOR INDEFINITE
PERIOD. THREE MORE EXPATRIATE LECTURERS HAVE BEEN DETAINED
AND MORE ARRESTS FEARED. END SUMMARY.

2. STUDENT STRIKE WHICH BEGAN FEBRUARY 5 (REFTEL) CONTINUED INTO
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WEEKEND. STRIKE BEGAN TAKE UGLY TURN FRIDAY WHEN SOME FACULTY

MEMBERS, (INCLUDING ONE AMERICAN FULBRIGHT PROFESSOR) WERE THREATENED WITH PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IF THEY PERSISTED IN ATTEMPTING CONDUCT CLASSES AS USUAL. ON SATURDAY MORNING INCIDENT BETWEEN STUDENTS BACKING AND OPPOSING NIGERIAN DEAN OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES LED TO THREAT OF SERIOUS VIOLENCE AND BROUGHT POLICE TO CAMPUS. IN ENSUING CONFRONTATION STUDENTS WERE DISPERSED BY TEAR GAS AND SEVERAL POLICE SUFFERED MINOR INJURIES FROM THROWN ROCKS. BY AFTERNOON PARAMILITARY RIOT POLICE HAD SEALED OFF CAMPUS AND WERE NOT ALLOWING EITHER ENTRY OR EXIT.

3. SOMETIME OVER WEEKEND GOVERNMENT TOOK DECISION TO CLOSE DOWN UNZA FOR INDEFINITE PERIOD. MONDAY MORNING LARGE NUMBERS OF RIOT POLICE WERE ON HAND TO SUPERINTEND LOADING OF STUDENTS ON BUSES. THERE IS CONFLICTING INFORMATION SO FAR RECEIVED THAT STUDENTS WERE EITHER SENT TO RURAL RECONSTRUCTION CAMPS OR DUMPED AT BUS STOP AND GIVEN BUS FARE TO GET HOME.

4. ALSO OVER WEEKEND ZAMBIAN SECURITY AUTHORITIES DETAINED THREE MORE WHITE EXPATRIATE LECTURERS ON UNZA STAFF. THOSE DETAINED INCLUDE ONE ITALIAN AND ONE SOUTH AFRICAN FROM HUMANITIES/SOCIAL SCIENCE FACULTY AND A DUTCH ENGINEERING LECTURER. THIS MAKES TOTAL OF FOUR EXPATRIATE LECTURERS UNDER DETENTION. EMBASSY HAS SINCE HEARD FROM ANOTHER AMERICAN FACULTY MEMBER WHO EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT HE TOO (AND POSSIBLY OTHERS) MAY BE SUBJECT TO DETENTION BECAUSE OF SIGNATURE WITH 72 OTHERS OF FACULTY PETITION PROTESTING VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND DEMANDING RELEASE OF DETAINED BRITISH LECTURER LIONEL CLIFFE. SO FAR, HOWEVER, NO AMCITS KNOWN TO BE DETAINED.

5. COMMENT: AS REPORTED REFTTEL, STUDENT STRIKE REPORTEDLY AROSE FROM BOTH RESENTMENT AT CLIFFE DETENTION AND FROM DISSATISFACTION WITHIN HUMANITIES/SOCIAL SCIENCE FACULTY AT CERTAIN PROPOSED CURRICULUM CHANGES. NUMBER OF EUROPEAN AND AT LEAST ONE AMERICAN WHITE EXPATRIATE FACULTY MEMBERS HAVE BEEN ALLEGED TO US TO BE INVOLVED IN THIS AGITATION FOR ONE REASON OR THE OTHER. ANGOLA, OBJECT OF ORIGINAL JANUARY 15 STUDENT DEMONSTRATION, NO LONGER APPEARS BE PRIMARY OR EVEN IMPORTANT SECONDARY ISSUE. GRZ DECISION TO ARREST SUSPECTED FACULTY AGITATORS, CLOSE DOWN UNIVERSITY, AND SEND STUDENTS AWAY STRIKES US AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TYPICAL CASE OF OVER-REACTION TO PERCEIVED INTERNAL SECURITY THREAT. HOWEVER, GIVEN STUDENT/FACULTY DISREGARD FOR EARLIER WARNING BY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS MILNER (WHO, WE SUSPECT, STILL SMARTING FROM STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS OF SEVERAL YEARS AGO IN WHICH HE BECAME A MAJOR TARGET) TO END STRIKE, GROWING DANGER OF VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS, CONTINUING VOCAL EXPRESSIONS OF UNHAPPINESS FROM LABOR LEADERS AND PUBLIC OVER RECENT PRICE INCREASES, INCIDENTS OF TERRORISM IN WESTERN PROVINCE, AND

TENSE EXTERNAL SITUATION, GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES' DECISION TO
CRACK DOWN HARD ON UNZA PROBABLY TAKEN IN CALCULATION THAT ANY
SOFTER RESPONSE MIGHT BE VIEWED AS WEAKNESS AND THUS OPEN DOOR TO
EVEN MORE TROUBLES FOR GOVERNMENT.
WILKOWSKI

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